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Letter dated 17 January 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, and with reference to the action taken by the United States naval forces against the oil tanker *Sandy*, leased by the National Iranian Tanker Company, in the Persian Gulf on 19 December 2001, I have the honour to state the following:

The above-said ship, on completing loading at Al Jubail (Saudi Arabia) on 17 December 2001, had proceeded to discharge her cargo at the port of Abadan (Iran). En route, the United States naval forces at Soorbya Oilfield inspected the tanker on the same day. After acquiring clearance from the United States Navy, the ship proceeded to Abadan anchorage, where it arrived at 0500 hours on 18 December 2001 awaiting the pilot and tide. The Iranian pilot went onboard at 1630 hours on the same day. The ship was then positioned at 29 49.80 N and 048 47.40 E where the Islamic Republic of Iran enjoys full sovereignty.

At 0200 hours, 19 December 2001, the United States naval forces approached and surrounded the vessel and attacked the ship and its crew aggressively. They destroyed the vessel's equipment, hit and held the crew at gunpoint, and interrogated them in a harsh and insulting manner. In fact, the ship's Master was badly beaten and handcuffed for several hours. The Iranian pilot was also treated brutally and inhumanely. The United States forces also took away the vessel's manifest and the crew's passports and belongings.

At 1720 hours, 19 December 2001, the ship was finally released and the detained documents were returned to the Master. Following such an unlawful action taken by the United States naval forces, and in order to avoid another unfortunate incident, the vessel was instructed by the National Iranian Tanker Company to proceed to the port of Mahshahr (Iran) for discharging. At 1020 hours, 20 December 2001, the ship arrived at Mahshahr port, where its injured personnel were taken to the hospital for medical treatment.

The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns the action taken by the United States forces in the Persian Gulf against the aforesaid vessel, and considers such action as a blatant violation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Iran also believes that such an unlawful practice jeopardizes the peace, stability and security in the region and is incompatible with the norms and principles of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and Security Council resolutions. Iran therefore holds the Government of the United States liable for the damage made to

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its interests and nationals as a result of the irresponsible action taken by the United States Navy against the above-said oil tanker.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Hadi **Nejad Hosseinian**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative